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MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Rethinking Foreignness in the Works of John Milton

by

Courtney Van Saders

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

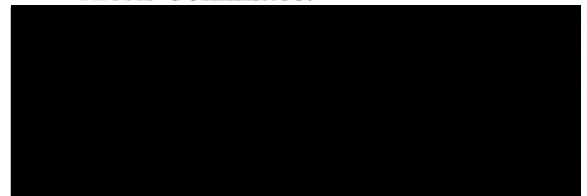
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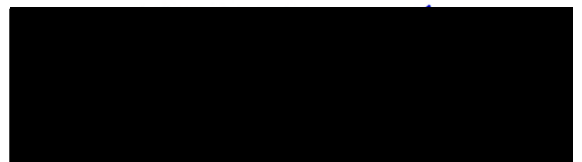
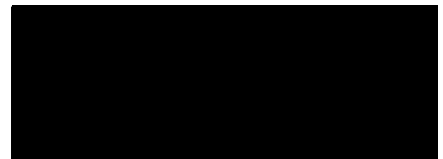
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Abstract

This thesis contends that in John Milton's early poems written between 1627 and 1639, he starts the process of developing an understanding of boundaries and borders he would use later in his career. Chapter one examines Milton's *Elegia Quarta* and *The Masque at Ludlow Castle*. Within *Elegia Quarta*, Milton explores the relationship of borders between mainland Europe and England. He uses the image of his childhood mentor Thomas Young as a physical representation of borders. While in *The Masque at Ludlow Castle*, I concentrate on the complexity of the barriers and boundaries between England and Wales and the development of Milton's idealistic views of nationalism. Within in Chapter two, I direct my attention to his poems written during his time in Italy: *Ad Salsillum poetam Romanum agrotantem*, *Mansus*, and *Epitaphium Damonis*. These poems demonstrate the process Milton went through to develop a mature perspective of the distinctions between England and Europe. During my examination of these poems, I will frequently focus on his English identity in relation to the poems. Thus, this thesis seeks to contends with the question of the distinctions between the two spheres young Milton.

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Introduction

What is the English identity? What is foreign to it? These questions are frequently asked by many scholars and writers today, especially in England. We all continue to ask "What is considered foreign?" in the context to the country of our origin. The English poet John Milton, known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, also wrote a series of works that would help him explore these questions. What might be considered "simple" or "obvious" to modern readers of Milton was not so to him. To us, the boundaries between countries are distinctly set by boundary lines. Europe as most people think of it today did not exist in Milton's youth, and these divisions were not so clearly defined. With the changing lines of division being drawn and redrawn, the people of England might not have been able to answer the questions about their identity and about where England ended, and what precisely was European or foreign. Throughout Milton's early works, such questions linger.

The changing boundaries on the map was very common for a young Milton, born 1608. On March 24, 1603, King James I ascended to the throne of England after the death of Queen Elizabeth I. James I was already the King of Scotland, and when he

became monarch of England, he united England and Scotland. These countries had a long history of acrimony, which did not simply disappear. New groups of people were now considered "English." As a child during this period of flux, Milton surely had an interest in wondering what made one English. Another major European event that affected his views was the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). The Thirty Years' War was a series of battles stemming from religious, dynastic, territorial, and commercial rivalries that constantly changed the boundaries within the map of Europe was constantly changing.

An inquisitive John Milton understood the obstacles faced when trying to understand the dynamic boundaries. Though the atmosphere lends itself to various interpretations about the identities of England or Scotland during the Early Modern period, Milton chooses at times to focus more on the distinctions between identity by using the boundaries of countries as his concrete representations, rather than using abstract notions of identity. In my thesis, I will be exploring how a young Milton displayed the developing concepts of boundaries and borders between the foreign and English spheres.

Early scholarship primarily focused on Milton's use of politics as a means to describe him as an English patriot. One of the earliest to take the issue on was James Holly Hanford in *John Milton, Englishman*, in 1949. This biography is interested in Milton's function as an "English poet." When describing Milton's life, Hanford chooses to place Milton in the middle of English tradition and history. Hanford was part of the

tradition that focused on the later part of Milton's career, especially *Paradise Lost*, to express his Englishness.

Christopher Hill, another early scholar, carried Hanford's idea of Milton and Englishness a step further in his ground breaking book *Milton and the English Revolution*. In his book, Hill dispelled the common misconception of his time that Milton was a Puritan exemplar. Instead, Hill helped to foster the image of Milton as a revolutionary. To Hill, this revolutionary Milton was seen in the part he played mostly after the English Revolution with his role as Secretary of Foreign Tongues. The study of English identification has been a primary topic in Milton scholarship over the years. Hill and Hanford represent the scholarship focused on the representation of Milton as an image of Englishness rather than his works.

Though other scholars have trekked the same long road as Hill, I intend to utilize the scholarship that will break away from their works for the most part. Recent scholarship has become more concerned with the division between the European countries and Milton's interactions with them throughout his life and works. Today, scholars take diverse approaches to understanding the portrayal of Milton, foreigners, and Englishness. Scholars today have traversed multiple paths leading to different ideas.

In "Europe comes to Mr. Milton's Door and Other Kinds of Visitation," Cedric C. Brown explores the connections between Milton's fame in Europe and visits from scholarly foreigners. Brown concentrates on the visitations in Milton's later works. Hugh

Jenkins in "Shrugging off the Norman Yoke: Milton's History of Britain and the Levellers" does something similar by delving into one of the multiple aspects questioning Milton's English identity. Jenkins admits to his readers that his essay will explain the following: "Yet by placing particular emphasis on the making of the English character through its numerous foreign conquests, Milton redefines the concept of the foreign yoke as something potentially beneficial, and thus answers Leveller arguments about 'Natural Law'" (310). Jenkins reflects on Milton's *The History of Britain* and connects Milton's use of foreign influence on the English identity. The problem with the scholarship Jenkins provides, in the context of my thesis, is that the concept of the English identity seems to have been firmly established as Milton is writing. Consequently, after reviewing Milton's works, it would be hard to pinpoint this "already established" perception of an English identity in Early Modern England. Instead, many writers, including Milton, contended in understanding and creating an English identity despite the influence of the Roman or Saxon invaders. Equally, Estelle Haan in *Both English and Latin: Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Milton's Neo-Latin Writings* tackles the challenge of understanding Milton's bilingualism in his early poems, and the function it plays when understanding Milton's diverse cultural inspirations. At the same time, she delves into understanding the biculturalism seen in Milton's Italian poems. Haan probes the multiple linguistic and cultural lenses Milton uses, by providing historical context for her readers. Haan emphasizes the structure of the poem and the linguistic traditions that inspire

Milton. In turn, she alludes to these elements as animating Milton's ideas of nationalism. Unlike the scholarship that Jenkins and Brown provide for their readers, her scholarship does not claim a firmly established English tradition. Rather, she evaluates the influences of other cultures on Milton's text.

In contrast, Mandy Green in "Reaching a European Audience: Milton's Neo-Latin poems for Charles Diodati; 1625-39" examines young Milton's Neo-Latin poems for his friend Charles Diodati. During the course of her evaluations, she argues that Milton's three Latin poems for his friend are among his self-revelatory in his 1645 collection. In the same vein as Mandy Green's piece, *Early Modern Nationalism and Milton's England* is a collection of essays edited by David Lowenstein and Paul Stevens. All the essays in this book center on Milton's multiple theories on nationalism. Various scholars like Thomas C. Corns, Victoria Kohn, Andrew Hadfield, Lowenstein, and Stevens all interpret different pieces of Milton to dissect and analyze his use of nationalism. On the same issue, John Kerrigan in his book *Archipelagic English* seeks to expand the "English Literature" which has long been thought about in narrowly English terms. In his chapter "The Archipelago England: Milton and Marvell to 1660," he examines the interactions in Milton's writings between European and English people within and around the British-Irish archipelago. The issue of geographic boundaries was explored in Milton studies by Elizabeth Sauer in her book *Milton Toleration and Nationhood*. Sauer mixes the abstract concepts of thought with the concrete images of

terrain used in Milton's works. These elements come together in her work to interpret how geography can play a role in understanding abstract theory. According to *Milton Toleration and Nationhood*, geography acts as representations for higher abstract notions of thought rather than only concrete representations. She explains Milton's use of geography within his poetry to appraise these elements, especially when evaluating *Paradise Lost*. All these scholars scrutinize many aspects of Milton's works and life. Yet the problem with most of the scholarship is that people believe they need to use abstract thought when writing about these subjects. Nevertheless, it is also true that in many cases using abstract concepts with historical influence is more appropriate. But, the scholarship pertaining to Milton would benefit more from an in-depth look into the concrete images Milton uses throughout his works.

While the works have contributed interesting and thought provoking material on the subject of Milton, foreignness, and Englishness, there are still a few areas pertaining to the subject that remain unexplored. Previous scholarship (e.g. David Lowenstein, Paul Stevens, and John Kerrigan) has argued that Milton's concepts of boundaries and borders are more developed in his later works. The focus in much of this scholarship has been on either the concept of Englishness or foreignness, and not exactly on how boundaries and borders affect his works. The gap in the knowledge extends towards their choice of Milton material. While his later works are filled with a world travelled Milton, who clearly placed his knowledge and understanding on full display, scholarship has not paid

as much attention to his earlier works. A closer examination of his younger works can lead to a well-rounded scholarship focused on multiple aspects of his career, all in-depth and detail oriented.

Even after the scholarship is more balanced, the question remains: “so what?” and “why should scholars care about Milton’s usage of boundaries and borders?” The study’s significance is not only to analyze his earlier works, but through my evidence to understand Milton’s earlier usage of the concept of foreign and English, and to clarify the context he uses in his later works. He developed an understanding of the complexity and divisions between the two spheres, which goes beyond a rudimentary awareness. His position as Secretary of Foreign Tongues and the heavy usage of his questioning of borders and barriers in a less “turbulent” period of European history thus allowed him to view the subjects with more focus. His later works helped many scholars to understand his interest in the questions of nationalism, English identity, foreignness, boundaries, and borders. However, scholarship has long been attracted to the image of “master poet” Milton. Milton’s earlier works express an emerging poet with much potential. The significance of my research is to analyze deeper into his nascent works and to understand how his experience qualified him.

Next, I will discuss one of the major components of my thesis: the research design. The first part of chapter one will consist of *Elegia Quarta*, where Milton shows his audience his contemplation of boundaries and borders. Throughout *Elegia Quarta*,

Milton questions the limit of England's borders in times of war. He offers the audience a focal point, his childhood mentor Thomas Young. Thomas Young, a Scot, is serving in the Thirty Years' War during the course of the poem. Using the Thirty Years' War as a backdrop is essential to understanding the poem. I will ponder how easy it would have been to travel across borders and boundaries at this time. There will be a brief examination of the key roles of the English Channel and the White Cliffs of Dover in the interpretation of the poem, as concrete geographical borders. Also, I will be acknowledging how Thomas Young is symbolic of borders and boundaries in this issue. Since Young is a Scot by birth, he does not fit into what most people would say is the "traditional Englishman." Milton does not state what country Young was from in *Elegia Quarta*. Thus, I will state how Young's appearance and the lack of explicit detail allows for open interpretation of his identity. *The Masque of Ludlow Castle* or *Comus* describes the period before his travels abroad. I will examine Milton's use of drama in *Comus* to show his representations of traveling across boundaries. Conversely, his poetry, especially in the period during and after his travels through Europe, tends to be more straightforward and displays how aware Milton was of his Englishness in the context of the other foreignness in these European countries he visited.

In chapter two, the works used will portray Milton's more mature view of boundaries. I will use some of Milton's later works such as *Ad Salsillum poetam Romanum Aegrotantem*, *Mansus*, and *Epitaphium Damonis*. *Ad Salsillum poetam*

Romanum Aegrotantem shows a young Milton self-aware of his role as an “Englishman” abroad. Earlier in *Elegia Quarta*, Milton only scratched the surface by imagining what it would be like to be an Englishman abroad with Thomas Young. *Mansus* expands this image. At the same time, Milton uses a more classical image throughout the poem to depict travel, as he did in *Elegia Quarta*. Finally, *Epitaphium Damonis* brings all of these elements together to produce a thoughtful and rich elegy for his deceased friend Charles Diodati. Throughout the course of the poem, he mixes all the elements that were shown in the earlier poems I mentioned, as well as using “English” iconography (e.g. Merlin, King Arthur, etc.). At times, my thesis will touch upon the language boundary. His works about the questioning of the spaces of borders and boundaries between countries are in Latin. Instead of writing those poems in English, he deliberately chooses to write them in Latin, to express biculturalism. This will be a secondary question explored throughout my thesis. His works suggest curiosity about concrete borders and boundaries, such as the divisions of lines on a map to separate countries, as well as the language barrier that separates people.

Further, I move on to the theoretical framework of this thesis. With New Historicism, I will explain the choices Milton uses in his poems and works. My choice of the theory is based on the cultural and historical events surrounding young Milton’s life. *Elegia Quarta* relies heavily on the use of the Thirty Year’s War and how the war effects Milton’s view point on the subject of boundaries and borders separating the English and

foreign spheres. My intention is to clearly demonstrate how this event allowed Milton to start to thinking about these issues. My second chapter will use this theory to a lesser extent. Additionally, I will be exploring how Milton's travels affected his opinion about his Englishness in relation to his travels abroad. The theory will be less present in the second chapter. Nevertheless, it will be important in understanding Milton's inspiration for writings that come as a direct result of his experiences.

Ultimately, this thesis poses the question of Milton's use of boundaries and borders between the foreign and the English spheres in his earlier works. I approach this issue with a New Historical lens. Pairing the New Historical theory with my research question will help my readers to understand the cultural and historical implications motivating Milton to begin questioning the nature of boundaries separating England from Europe. My thesis will contribute to providing clarity about Milton's views on boundaries and the debate of English identity. This will be done by examining Milton's earlier works to exhibit his developing understanding of the material. Unlike much of the scholarship explored in this introduction, I will focus primarily on Milton as a young poet rather than as a master poet. Overall, the question of the distinctions between the two spheres and the balance between the two played an intricate role in shaping young Milton's understanding of their differences.

Chapter One

The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) would involve most of Europe. In turn, European divisions were tested, broken, and rearranged, all depending on the outcome of these series of battles. The outbreak of war would affect some of Milton's writing in his early youth: his fascination with European boundaries, borders, and the beginnings of his examination of "identity" abroad. In Milton's *Elegia Quarta* (Elegy IV), he questions the limit of England's borders during this war, pondering how easy it would have been to travel (within the poem) across borders and boundaries. There will be a brief examination of the key roles of the English Channel and the White Cliffs of Dover as concrete geographical borders, in the interpretation of the poem. With Thomas Young as the focal point of the poem, Milton acknowledges him as the symbolic representation for borders and boundaries. Since Young is a Scot by birth, he does not fit into the traditional image of an "Englishman." Although, Milton does not state what country Young was from historically, it is known he was born in Scotland. Thus, I will discuss Young's character, as well as the lack of specific details about Young's background, which allows for open interpretation of his identity. After *Elegia Quarta*, Milton was commissioned to write *The Masque at Ludlow Castle* or *Comus* in 1634, to commemorate the formal installation of John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, as Lord Lieutenant of Wales and the border counties. In *Comus*, Milton investigates the precarious situation between

country borders using Ludlow as the border between these two countries. Because of this location, Milton presents the masque by following the journey of Bridgewater's three children to analyze the nature of travel and the power of England in Wales. This dominance over Wales presents the beginnings of a colonialist view of England's power over other countries. The figure Comus represents a boundary traveler upsetting the delicate nature of space and power between the two countries. Along with the other figures presented in *Comus*: the children, the Attendant Spirit, Comus, and Sabrina, I will analyze the complexity of the barriers and boundaries between England and Wales and the development of Milton's idealistic view of nationalism.

Particularly in the early part of his career, Milton analyzes the weakened space between England and Europe. He experiments with the limitations of boundaries as well as the similarities between the English and foreign space. Young's appearance in the poem allows Milton to discuss English and foreign boundaries and borders, and ideas of English identity and nationalism. Milton scholars focus on Milton's career post the English Civil War, when he held the position of Secretary of Foreign Tongues in the Commonwealth, as writer of his regicide tracts, or his authorship of *Paradise Lost*. However, his curiosity of boundaries and borders appears before that time, at the onset of the Thirty Years' War.

In Milton's youth, his father hired tutors to give him, as Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns termed this, "a gentleman's education." During approximately 1617 or

1618, Young entered Milton's life as his tutor; however, their close relationship ended in April 1620 when Young was appointed chaplain to the English Merchant Adventurers in Hamburg (Campbell and Corns 17). *Elegia Quarta*, written as a letter, but considered a poem, was composed during March and April 1627 to show Young his mastery of Latin. Consequently, *Elegia Quarta* focuses on Young's situation within the Thirty Years' War.

Milton does not begin by directing the poem towards Young, as one would expect. Rather, he seeks his poem to: "Make haste, my letter, run across the wide ocean. Off you go!" (61). Instead of referring to his poem as a poem, he terms it a "letter." In most cases, a poem is a static entity. By referring to it as a letter, he transforms the form of the poem and prepares his readers for extensive traveling. Milton applies this change to introduce his readers to constant motion. After imploring the "letter" to make haste, Milton reveals to his readers how the poem needs to travel "across the wide ocean" (61). Traveling across the ocean displays the poem in motion. Having the letter "travel" to its destination allows Milton to depict a progress of spaces in and out of boundaries. The movement from one boundary to the next demonstrates the similarities and differences between foreign and English, using Young as the common ground between these spaces.

The letter starts with an appeal to ancient sea deities to bestow a safe passage, and the poem moves to discuss Germany in this imagined space, saying: "And when you catch sight of the yellow sand on the shore of Germany, make for the walls of Hamburg, a wealthy city which, according to tradition, takes its name from Hama, who is supposed

to have been killed by a Danish club" (61). His approach represents the physical embodiment of movement through letters. When the letter crosses the ocean, it lies in a liminal stage, caught by the tides. As soon as the letter travels back onto land, Milton depicts constant travel. He creates an image of Germany, but, even more importantly, he conceptualizes its space and movement allowing Milton the opportunity to cross barriers. Barriers are crossed for the reader as well. As the letter travels through the transitional space with Milton, English readers are quickly becoming foreign. Thus, if the original readers were English, they would react differently to the emerging change of space (than, say, a European reader of the poem). That means once the English individual is removed from England they are no longer a part of English culture. In turn, they become foreigners in another country and adapt to the changes that will come over the course of the poem. This method of transposing the English reader provides a reminder to the reader of the delicate balance between the identities between foreign and English. Though a person may not be foreign in their own country (thus not an outsider), once removed, the reader begins to adopt the role of a foreigner. As the reader takes on this role in the text, Milton portrays a more negative side of life as an English foreigner later in the poem, when he details Young's environment in another country.

Upon arrival in Germany, the first view is sand: "...and when you catch sight of the yellow sand on the shore of Germany make for the walls of Hamburg." Touching down in Germany on a beach recalls an invasion, an unwanted arrival. Milton does not

see a harbor for a boat to dock; thus, from touching down on the sand, a reader could assume the letter is unexpected, since Young does not expect the arrival of the poem/letter. The poem as a letter moves without notice and travels safely. There is creation of a rising anticipation upon viewing land. As soon as the readers touch down upon the sand, there appears to be a hasty retreat to Hamburg. How Milton uses the phrase "make for the walls" is out of place compared to the rest of the line. The verb "make" alludes to some type of running or quick action. Typically, it would not be used in a poem where there is no hurried action. Instead, the usage of "make" in the context of this poem suggests language used to describe a battle scene.

Unlike many of his poems of the period, *Elegia Quarta* best displays the use of a marginal space in between boundaries and borders. Milton utilizes this space to view borders and countries on neutral ground, essential to glimpse the problems within the spheres of England and Europe. It is later on in the poem that Milton uses this space to be contemplative, to rethink the divide, and the common thoughts of the foreign. During the crossing, Milton quickly places his reader through objective margins to pay more attention to critical figures of the text. In this case, the "neutral space" of the English Channel discards the pressure of the static view of England. At the same time, the violence and uncertainty of a European war is up for contemplation. It is only through a space between the two extremes that Milton can raise questions of these spaces.

Scholarship has not paid much mind to the inclusion of neutral zones, nor does it see this

as essential in understanding the nature of boundaries in this poem. The unbiased area between spaces of travel helps the reader to see both sides (the homeland England and the war zone Germany).

While the poem progresses through the English Channel, the reader witnesses the change from one space to another in the poem. Milton inhabits the poem with the reader: "O native country, hard-hearted parent, more cruel than the white cliffs of your coastline, battered by foaming waves, is it fitting that you should expose your innocent children in this way?" (63). When Milton pens "...more cruel than the white cliffs of your coastline," he deliberately refers to the famous White Cliffs of Dover. The main reason is that this location, the cliffs, is the closest proximity to European space. The cliffs are the first English landmark seen when approaching Dover port along the English Channel, as well as the last English landmark when leaving England. Returning to England gives closure to Milton's poem. As the reader travels across the channel, the travel back would include viewing the cliffs, especially if the travel ended in Dover (Readman "'The Cliffs are not Cliffs:' The Cliffs of Dover and National Identities in Britain, c.1750-c.1950").

The English Channel is never explicitly stated in the poem; nonetheless, Milton does mention the White Cliffs of Dover. The coastline and the English Channel are connected to each other, and thus it would be safe to assume that the travel home includes traveling through the channel. The English Channel is the space of borders; it separates, yet no governing power can fully contain it due to its geological location. There is a shift

from the image to a moment of contemplation. The journey home changes its pace; whereas the journey to the foreign space was quick, the return home appears to be slower. The poem no longer acts like a speedy letter to serve its purpose of delivering information. Milton establishes a moment for his readers to contemplate the images they have seen in the poem. As he shifts through the images, so does the pace of the poem alter. It gradually decreases to accommodate the more reflective tone. Physical boundaries are critical at this point in the poem to serve as representations of England. Traveling by sea shows the limitations of the divide between foreign and England. In this space, Milton defies the idea of traditional boundaries (by choosing a space difficult to protect).

The return home offers Milton's readers an atypical view of travel and the homeland. At this moment, Milton characterizes the foreign space against England to depict it as positive. The difference between the two becomes clear as Milton and his audience have the capacity to see both sides, literally and physically. His description of the White Cliffs of Dover hints at the possibility of a marker to indicate the border of England. In an imaginary scene, the reader, as well as Milton, resides in a liminal space and manipulates the in-between stage of the travel home. Consequently, the travel back has left an impact on Milton. As he approaches here, he feels disdain for his native land. In arriving home, he does not want his reader to quickly end their excursion and desires the reader to look at England and the foreign space. In this type of environment, one

would not normally think twice about it. His eventual readers would wish to travel speedily from one space to another, but he guides them into a moment of pause, to see both sides. In viewing England and Europe side by side, his fellow natives can easily see the problems with the country's infrastructure and government. He uses Young's journey through the English Channel and the White Cliffs of Dover as physical representations in the neutral zone. In this state, these image identifiers promote the readers' viewing these spaces as concrete representations instead of abstract concepts. Using these landmarks helps the readers to understand the limitation of spaces.

As a young man, Milton raises concrete issues of borders in *Elegia Quarta*, through the language of travel. These moments distinguish the differences caused by margins, especially when it concerns England. The appearance of borders has largely gone unnoticed in Milton studies. Milton scholar Elizabeth Sauer fills in the gaps with her comprehensive study of geography as used in Milton's works. However, instead of analyzing Milton's lesser known poems like *Elegia Quarta*, she focuses on the more well-known poems like *Paradise Lost*. Even though she skips mentioning it, her studies include very insightful comments on the nature of geography and how it applies to the poetics of Milton. To Sauer, the specific geographical names relate to Milton in his overall poetic language. She writes:

Poetry facilitates or completes the conversion of place into space...Because geography as a discipline is embedded in Humanistic study, the poeticized

geographic allusions in the epic are thickly contextualized, and the tightly wrought catalogues of sonorous place names put a wide range of learning, mastered by the English epic poet, on full display (123).

Milton throughout the poem guides his readers through specific geographic locations. In the case of *Elegia Quarta*, the names mentioned do not necessarily demonstrate Milton's overall knowledge. Instead, his use of clues encourages the reader to understand a place in the poem. The use of names is for location in transitional stages, and to help coordinate the space the viewer occupies over the course of a poem. Sauer analyzes geography in relation to the epic poem genre. *Elegia Quarta* is not categorized as an epic poem, because it does not cover as much material as one. Geography in a short poem like *Elegia Quarta* specifies space.

Throughout this chapter, I have indicated some of the elements in Milton's contemplation of boundaries and borders, with their limitations during war. I have only touched upon the magnitude of Thomas Young's role. Young is not only a historical figure to fix a time for Milton's poem, but also a character and a symbol for the borders and barriers between the spheres. Since the poem is dedicated to Young, Milton offers the readers a focal point. Unlike what most readers would expect of a poem dedicated to someone, Milton twists Young's character in the text to interpret the travel of spaces.

Further in *Elegia Quarta*, the question of life outside the domestic English setting is raised through the living conditions of an Englishman in an alien setting.

Taking it upon himself to uncover the conditions of living, Milton exposes a tense situation: "But you are living among strangers, in poverty and loneliness, while all around you echoes the horrifying noise of war" (62-3). For a moment, he fills the space of the poem with the harsh reality of Young in the midst of foreign battle. Milton's readers follow Young in the text, and assume the role of foreignness as they are thrust into Young's harsh realities. Unlike Young, Milton fantasizes what it would be like in this foreign sphere. At this point in his life, he had not travelled abroad and definitely had not experienced fighting wars in other countries. At the time he was writing the poem, he was still in England. Since he had no or very little prior experience of travel, he has one of his first opportunities to imagine what it would be like to be in such situations.

Depicting the Scot Young as an Englishman in the midst of war serves as an opportunity to reinterpret the concept of foreignness. In the context of the whole poem, Young's "Scottish" heritage is ignored, in order for Milton to use him as a representative for the nameless individuals fighting in the Thirty Years' War. At the same time, Milton yearns for more support from the homeland. One of the main concerns Milton exhibits through the text is his frustration towards the English government. As he depicts Young in the setting of war, Milton places a traditionally historically frustrating moment in a clearer context, beginning in 1611 with the union of Frederick V, Elector Palatine, to Princess Elizabeth of England. Their union was meticulously planned to strengthen the Protestant Union by linking powerful England as an ally to the Rhenish Palatine (a part of

what today is Germany). After the marriage, James I agreed to a six-year alliance beginning in April 1612 (Wilson 247)¹. Wilson describes the challenge England faced in avoiding being drawn fully into the battles. The year 1625 was detrimental to England. In March of that year James I died, and his son Charles ascended the throne. Both monarchs believed the Thirty Years' War was a mainland European problem, not an English one. Both James I and Charles I must have seen the closeness to the conflict as a problem for the state of England, and for the most part kept away from it in order to protect the already delicate nation in transition from one king to another.

Once the people of England pressured the government to take action that was when action began to happen abroad. In his book, Wilson recounts the pressure on Charles I to act in aid of Frederick V as; "Yet the Crown felt it had to act, if only to satisfy popular pressure and to maintain its prestige" (321). The depiction of Young alone in the middle of war might be Milton's way of rallying others to arm themselves. Even though Milton did not publish *Elegia Quarta* publicly till 1645, the way he manipulates the language shows his consciousness of the tense situation between the crown and its people. Milton calling to arms the Great Protestant (a group of Protestant nations who would come to each other's aid if in trouble) cause aggravates the tension in England, while eliciting sympathy from his fellow countrymen by placing them in the same position as Young. Through his poem, he creates an image to evoke sympathy and

¹ All information pertaining to the Thirty Years' War comes from *The Thirty Years' War: Europe's Tragedy* by Peter H. Wilson.

outrage in order to garner public support for the war. However, Milton's inclusion of barriers and margins easily crossed from both sides of the Atlantic. Troops could easily leave England as well as enter through English borders and upset the delicate balance of peace, uprooting the unstable normalcy that England lived under. Through these instances, Milton shows his readers that disregarding foreign borders is not a wise course of action, especially when there are Englishmen fighting in the war. The poem is set in this unstable period, with the monarch unwilling to commit fully to the war.

Throughout the poem, Milton does not explicitly state Thomas Young's national identity. In fact, the reference to Young's identity goes as follows: "In your need you seek in a foreign land the sustenance which your ancestral home denied you" (63). Unlike the earlier parts of the poem, the reader only witnesses travel without Milton actually mentioning the space as "foreign." The uncertainty about the identity of the narrator displays its inclusion. Milton writing "ancestral home" is ambiguous. Again, Milton's absence of detail leaves Young's background open to interpretation. With the details Milton provides, the reader can infer that Young had to travel abroad to earn money to support himself, and that his ancestral home has denied him any viable outlet to make a living to support himself. Yet, how does Thomas Young fit into the poem as a foreigner in the role of an Englishman? Thomas Young was not from England. He was from Scotland and later moved to England. Although modern perceptions of British identity include England, Scotland, and Wales, during that era the name "Great Britain" had not

caught on in colloquial language till 1707 (Kerrigan 24). The modern perception of nationhood would agree that a person born in Scotland is Scottish and a person born in England is English, yet this was not the case with 17th century England. John Kerrigan proposes: "There were several versions of Britishness - regionally, confessionally, and institutionally varied - and they overlaid or accompanied other affiliations and identities" (24). Though the concept of "Great Britain" did not actually exist for the people of England, there appears to have been, at least according to Kerrigan, multiple ways for a person to demonstrate some type of "Britishness." Milton's ambiguity demonstrates Young representing multiple types of Britishness at once. Though Young is historically Scottish, Kerrigan's proposal would suggest that in the poem at least Young can be both Scottish and English.

While questioning Young's national identity in the poem, Milton notes the importance of the king in establishing national identity. When he refers to "O native country, hard-hearted parent," he is referring to England, not Scotland (63). He leaves the "native country" in question ambiguous, to appeal to an extended British Isle audience under Charles I. The English king is Scottish by his father King James IV of Scotland inheriting the throne of England after the death of Queen Elizabeth. When James became King of England, he brought Scotland and England together, thus bringing both countries under a type of shared identity and nationality. (Richards "The English Accession of James VI: 'National' Identity, Gender and the Personal Monarchy of

England"). "Native country" leaves the country's name ambiguous. It will not be until the next couple of words that Milton reveals the name of the country through geographical evidence. Milton combines Scotland and England as one joint nation, when he refers to himself and Young in the same statement. Further, portraying the country as a hard-hearted parent implies that there is only one native country. Milton's referring to natural boundaries is for his purpose of communicating with the populace of the Isle, not merely himself or Young. In the end, these inhabitants are the only ones included. The hard-hearted parent, too, has no definite gender, but it could be surmised that Milton's reference was directed at King James I or Charles I.

Milton refers to a native country as an abstract concept. Figuratively speaking, the native country on paper should protect its citizens, especially natural born ones. Throughout the poem, Milton forwards the notion that England is not protecting the basic rights of its citizens. The "hard-hearted parent" does not care for its homestead and children. Calling to the reader's attention the idea of the monarch as "father" in the overall structure of the country highlights the inefficiency of the rule of the monarch as well as the inefficiency of the governmental structure. When the homestead or children are in trouble, the parent, or in this case the figurative father, would come to rescue any offspring because it would be in his best interest to protect their future. In Milton's image, he typifies the hard-hearted parent as an individual who is not spurred to action even to protect the interest of his children and lacks the sympathy to lend a hand during a

tumultuous period in the country. Protection of the country does not quite fulfill his moral responsibility, in the eyes of Milton. Yet, in the poem, Milton describes a hesitant "hard-hearted parent." The purpose of the king is to maintain stability. Thus, the king does not serve his purpose by adequately filling the role.

Young's Scottishness performs a larger and more crucial role over the course of the poem. Young is modeled in the poem as the anonymous "you," and viewing Thomas Young as English as well as Scottish forces the readers to stop viewing Scotland and England as two separate entities, and instead start to consider closing the distance between them, a united kingdom of three separate countries coming together for a common cause. In the debate on Milton's use of boundaries and borders, Young is clearly the locus throughout the whole poem. Following his progress, the poem helps to use him as a concrete subject to influence Milton's point. Young's image allows readers to view him as a symbol of the unity of boundaries, and a representation of England and her subjects abroad. This is done to close the gap of animosity between England and Scotland. Young's form is thus a symbol of England as a whole including Scotland and Ireland, not as the separate countries that tradition dictated.

At this stage, he appears to be utilizing the notion of the king's two bodies to question the strength and power the king has. Referring to the notion, he demonstrates an early perception of the lack of power displayed by the king with reference to protecting his people in either the homeland or abroad. Addressed in Ernst H. Kantorowicz's *The*

King's Two Bodies, Kantorowicz analyzes the distinction between the king's two bodies: his mortal and immortal body. Kantorowicz describes the perpetuity of this concept in cultures, particularly power in English culture, as:

The perpetuity of the head of the realm and the concept of a rex qui nunquam, a "king that never dies," depended mainly on the interplay of three factors: the perpetuity of the Dynasty, the corporate character of the Crown, and the immortality of the royal Dignity. Those three factors coincided vaguely with the uninterrupted line of royal bodies, natural, with the permanency of the body politic represented by the head together with the members, and with the immortality of the office, that is, of the head alone (316-17).

Importantly, Kantorowicz builds up the idea of the body politic surrounding the concept of the king. The king's hand should extend past boundaries to adequately serve "his children." The addition of the words "native country" pinpoints that Milton wants to focus his reader's attention on England. Placing emphasis on England and its ruler, the poem increasingly focuses on the problems the country has with protecting its borders, attitudes towards the foreign space, and the people of the country when they are not residing within the safety of the country's borders during this turbulent time.

Yet, Milton takes this imagery of a hard-hearted parent a step further: "Is this the way you treat them, iron-hearted land, driving them onto foreign soil and allowing them

to search for their food on distant shores" (63). After describing the "hard-hearted parent," he describes the homeland as "iron-hearted land", like their king. The land has no heart for its subjects and has them fend for themselves. This sentiment is a repetition of Milton's earlier statement of "In your need you seek in a foreign land..." (63).

Repeating a similar phrase later on in the poem indicates Milton stressing this idea to his readers. Young cannot stay in his native land. Thus, he must seek to travel abroad.

Throughout the poem, Milton specifies change of space through the names of places and adding "foreign" gives the audience a spatial perspective.

Milton scholar Thomas Corns argues that the contemporaries of Milton had views opposed to those of Milton, regarding the Scottish. Specifically, he writes about John Cleveland's "The Rebel Scot." In his account, Scots are: "Citizens o' the world"...though they travel, not to learn foreign manners, but to fill their pockets" (206). Cleveland uses stereotypes to define the Scottish going abroad. For instance when a person travels abroad to learn foreign manners, it is accepted and understandable. However, if a person leaves their homeland in order to earn money, they are portrayed in a negative light. In Cleveland's opinion, travel is only appropriate if it is to learn, but not for profit. Milton's portrayal of Young contradicts Cleveland's image of the Scots. Cleveland believes the Scottish who travel abroad are seen as negative citizens of the world. Still, Milton stresses by repetition that Young has no choice but to seek foreign soil to earn a living. Instead of placing the blame on the individuals, Milton blames the

country for not helping their citizens. Between Milton and Cleveland, views of traveling abroad clash.

After richly exploring notions of boundaries and borders in *Elegia Quarta*, Milton revisits these concepts solidly once more in his works preceding his travels abroad. *The Masque at Ludlow Castle*, also known as *Comus*, combines these elements along with Milton's use of drama. Taken together, these elements produce a thought provoking masque about temperance and chastity against a predatory villain, as most Milton scholars have suggested. Instead, the connection to the divide between the spheres of England and Wales is an important plot point, a crucial point in understanding the complexity of barriers and boundaries between them in the drama and the development of Milton's idealistic views of nationalism.

In early 1634, Milton was commissioned to write *Comus* by Henry Lawes, a tutor to the Egerton children. He wrote *Comus* to commemorate John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater's formal installation as Lord President of the Council of Wales and the border counties. Barabara Lewalski recounts this event: "To celebrate his first visit to the regions he was charged to administer by his appointment in 1631 as Lord President of the Council of Wales" (Lewalski 63). Leah S. Marcus describes the exact extent of the Earl's power in Wales:

As President of the Council of Wales and Lord Lieutenant of Wales and the counties of the Welsh borders, Bridgewater was King Charles I's regional deputy

and surrogate; presiding over the Council, an important court of law that had been granted special jurisdiction over 'unlawful games,' adultery and other sexual offences (243).

Bridgewater's position as Lord President of the Council in the Marches began, as Kerrigan insinuates, this role was a negative one for the people of Wales: "Englishmen with attitude could present the Lord President of the council as a neo-medieval border baron, a bulwark against an alien people" (42). The town of Ludlow, home of the castle, acts as a border between Wales and England. Throughout *Comus*, the children technically are not leaving England, since Ludlow is a border town between England and Wales. The figurative "Ludlow" town in *Comus* suggests the children's travel into Wales, when in actuality they did not. On September 29, Michaelmas Night (a traditional date for newly elected or appointed officials to take office), *Comus* was performed for the Earl of Bridgewater. The Earl's three children, Alice (fifteen), John (eleven), and Thomas (nine) acted in the main roles. Alice starred as the Lady and her two younger brothers respectively played the roles of the Elder and Younger Brothers to the Lady.

The Attendant Spirit begins *Comus* with a background that commemorates Bridgewater and his family. Milton details the background of Bridgewater's appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Wales and the border counties for his audience. At the start of *Comus*, the Attendant Spirit acts a prologue to describe the events that lead the children on their way to Wales from their English home:

And wield their little tridents, but this isle
 The greatest, and the best of all the main
 He quarters to his blue-haired deities,
 And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
 A noble peer of mickle trust, and power
 Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
 An old, and haughty nation proud in arms:
 Where his fair offspring nursed in princely lore,
 Are coming to attend their father's state,
 And new-entrusted sceptre, but their way
 Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood (27-37).

The first half of the prologue: "But this isle/The greatest, and the best of all the main" suggests its use to distinguishing the land from others on the isle (27-28). "Isle" refers to the landmass that would in the future be referred to as the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and eventually Ireland). Of all the nations on the Isle, Milton paints England as the "best" of all. Because of this idea of "the greatest," Milton implies the dominance of England over the other countries. The dreams of the "best" on the isle grew more apparent in his later words. As scholar Victoria Kahn notes, by the time of *Samson Agonistes* Milton's nationalism is disappointed. However, in *Comus*, Milton's nationalism still has hopeful tendencies for the direction of England in his portrayal of it. Yet, towards the end of the masque are moments where he questions the extent of it. (Kahn 250). With *Samson Agonistes* thirty-seven years away, *Comus* is a fertile attempt to write a nationalistic piece, at least according to the prologue.

Once the Attendant Spirit describes the setting of the drama that is about to unfold, he moves on to give his audience a clearer understanding of the change in

Bridgewater's position in society and the kingdom: "A noble peer of mickle trust, and power/Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide/An old, and haughty nation proud in arms;" (31-32). The nationalistic heraldry continues in the prologue in the description surrounding Bridgewater's representation in the Masque. "A noble peer of mickle trust, and power" alludes to his position in English society. The reader understands he hails from England, because of the mention of the "haughty nation proud in arms", which is England. Again, the best nation sends a representation to the country. The father's distant role in the masque is to serve as an unseen representative. By extent a representation of England, Bridgewater represents England's power in Wales. Scholar Joad Raymond notes that in early modern England, the notion of nations was stable and "was one that equated the nation with the king's jurisdiction, that treated the people as the king's subjects, and the nation as its personal territory..." (162). Bridgewater acts as a representative of the crown that is stressed early in *Comus*. The Attendant Spirit's monologue celebrates English rule, without mentioning it clearly while experiencing it, and the audience would have to already have an understanding of the climate of power in England to understand the situation.

Towards the end of this prologue-like section, the children are mentioned in the context of their father: "Where his fair offspring nursed in princely lore,/Are coming to attend their father's state" (34-36). However, the shift from stable modern England to rustic superstitious Wales does more than show a change of space. By the end of the

masque, the children are visually changed from their experiences. Like their father, the children act as representatives of England and brought up in an upper class setting, the “princely lore.” The children journey to Wales to attend their father’s estate. The children “are coming to” means they are still traveling. They, in turn, did not completely make the transition between border and boundaries through England and into Wales. Their boundary crossing is developing, and the reader moves with the children through their travels. As they are on the cusp of the completion of travel through England to Wales, their journey will be interrupted by a foreign figure that will take them off the path to their father’s estate.

After the Attendant Spirit introduces Bridgewater’s children, it does the same for Comus. When describing Comus, the spirit gives a detailed explanation of his background:

Whom therefore she brought up and Comus named,
 Who ripe, and frolic of his full-grown age,
 Roving the Celtic, and Iberian fields,
 At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
 And in thick shelter of black shades embowered,
 Excels his mother at her mighty art,
 Offering to every weary traveller,
 His orient liquor in a crystal glass, (58-65).

The Spirit describes to the audience that Circe, the infamous Greek goddess of magic is the mother of Comus. She is one who brings him up and names him Comus, facts basic enough to understand. However, as he grows older, Milton focuses on where Comus

travels. He spends most of his youth in "Celtic and Iberian fields," which according to the footnote provided by the editor John Carey means "France and Spain." That Comus is inhabiting the Celtic and Iberian fields, before the masque, is crucial in understanding his role as a boundary traveler. Before the beginning of the drama, Comus was located in other countries. In the course of the masque, he finds himself in the Welsh countryside. In this way, Comus himself is "doubly foreign." Since Comus's mother is a Classical Greek and Roman figure, it would be safe to assume that Comus is a classical figure. Outside the context of Milton's poem, the minor god Comus appeared in later antiquity as the god of festive mirth and joy, as was his son Bacchus who in the course of *Comus* is still considered his son. The differences between Milton's Comus and the classical Comus are that he is a being that possesses magical powers, and Milton mentions Circe being his mother. He is classical Greek foreign since Greek figures are not part of traditionally English imagery. In this case, Milton borrows a typical figure from Greek mythology and uses it to create a new figure. At the same time, this newly created "classical Greek figure" does not even reside in Greece, as the reader would expect. Instead of staying in one country, Comus travels between two boundaries; three, if one includes the Welsh countryside in the beginning. However, the Attendant Spirit is not clear whether or not Comus has just arrived in Wales or has been there for some time. Either way, in the dark woods of Wales, a classical figure hides to seduce travelers.

The mythological basis for Comus has no connection to travelers, in the manner that the Comus presented in Comus does: "Excels his mother at her mighty art,/Offering to every weary traveller,/His orient liquor in a crystal glass," (63-65). The connection between Comus and travelers lies in the use of the traveler in culture. Travelers into England were considered "strangers." Comus follows the model of the French or Lombard stranger (in early modern English travel writing) present in Eva Joanna Holmberg and Chloe Houston's article. He in effect is: "difficult, dangerous, unruly, and even infectious." (2). Interestingly though, Comus for all of his traveling does not necessarily need to be considered a "foreigner." Joan Fitzpatrick notes that Londoners' perspective of foreigners would categorize them as "strangers": "it is less important where the foreigners came from than that they are foreign; the focus is on their alterity, their strangeness, primarily their un-Englishness" (129). To Milton, it's not Comus's foreignness that is the problem, it's the values he represents. Comus is an un-English creature attempting to spoil with his unruly ways the children away from their Englishness, provoking them to become strangers as well to their culture and identity. The usage of it during Milton's time was according to the Oxford English Dictionary, "originally used the reference to the countries lying immediately to the east of the Mediterranean or Southern Europe (i.e. east of the Roman Empire)" ("Orient"). His "orient liquor" is a foreign substance from a distant land. Milton does not describe it as native. Being connected to Comus, the "orient liquor" suggests the concoction comes

from a different region, most likely the Mediterranean. "Orient" continues this image of the stranger, and the way Milton uses the term demonstrates the negativity of it and the un-Englishness attached to it.

Comus progresses, where using the guise of a villager, Comus captures the Lady and brings her back to his pleasure palace. While there, he straps her to an enchanted chair and tempts her with a drink from his magical cup and a suspicious arrangement of food in order to arouse her appetite and desires. However, through all this she remains steadfast, and rejects these attempts. As she is strapped to the chair, the Attendant Spirit helps her brothers find her and, together, they chase Comus away. As the Lady remains bound to the chair, the Attendant Spirit calls on Sabrina to help the Lady, who has retained her steadfast virtue through this whole ordeal.

Sabrina's overall role in the drama is to protect the chastity of the Lady. The Lady's two brothers as "foreigners" in effect cannot save their own sister from her current fate. They could chase Comus away, but they do not have the power to help her out of the chair. It is the power of the Welsh figure Sabrina. Whatever magic Comus possesses can only be broken by the power of Sabrina. Leah S. Marcus explains Sabrina as:

She requires the aid of Sabrina, a mythographic figure associated with the River Severn in Wales who, according to the standard accounts, was also an innocent victim-by-association of family sexual crimes, the product of

a rape, thrown into the river to drown and instead transformed into a healing goddess (245).

As English children, Milton hints at the fact the children need the indigenous Welsh figure to protect them, even though their father was sent to Wales to protect the land. Sabrina's main quality is what she represents as a physical figure, and not her words during the masque. Her role questions the limitations of their father's powers. If the English children could not save themselves or be saved by their father, Milton questions the limitations of the English rule imposed upon Wales. Even as England rules over Wales, in a confrontation the English superiors still need the aid of its native figures to save the day. The help of Sabrina embodies the emphasis on the combined efforts needed to fight Comus.

Once Sabrina frees the Lady from her imprisonment, the Attendant Spirit helps the children home to their parents. At the end of the play, the Spirit presents the children to their parents, Bridgewater and his wife Frances,

Noble Lord, and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight,
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own,
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays,
With a crown of deathless praise, (965-972).

The hardness of the state melts away in "Noble Lord, and Lady bright,/I have brought ye new delight" (966-7). Instead of being a distant figure, the father becomes a physical character in the masque. His physical presence represents a change in how English authority is presented. In the beginning, Bridgewater's absent figure works with a rigid notion of nation where the land equates to the king's territory. Bridgewater's earlier presentation follows the model scholar Joad Raymond presents by explaining that nation was equated as the king's jurisdiction and his personal territory (162). Earlier, the father represented this type of system. Here, the father presented has less political authority over his people (Raymond 162).

The Attendant Spirit stresses that the children are changed by their experiences with Comus and the journey to Wales. I propose that, instead of a "spiritual growth" suggested by most Milton scholars, the children grow through their national identity. Other critics have pointed out that it was in the early modern period that "the borders between both conceptual and national territories were redrawn as solid rather than dotted lines" (Baker 9). Baker's explanation of early modern borders fits in with Milton's conflicted ideas of physical borders between nations and one's identity in terms of it. Comus presents the first example of this clear separation in Milton's works. In the Italian poems, these distinctions will become clearer and even more present. Milton eliminates any ambiguity to the children's culture by presenting them as passing a test: "And sent them here through hard assays,/With a crown of deathless praise," (971-2). Though

tempted by the "foreign" aspects Comus represents, the children resist and are allowed to retain their identity as English citizens. Milton's borders have been presented in many of his works as "dotted lines", where countries' borders do not matter and are easily crossed. However, this concept does not apply to national identity. After *Elegia Quarta*, Milton presents national identity as a solid unchangeable part of a person's existence. Milton establishes firm solid lines when it comes to identity within space different than "the dotted lines" used by Baker to support his claims.

In examining Milton's early fascination with borders and barriers, the reader can view the complicated nature of the fine line between the spheres of England and the foreign Europe. *Elegia Quarta* demonstrates Milton's earliest examinations of these issues. Over the course of it, Milton made these examinations in a time of war. However, unlike the other poems I will explore, *Elegia Quarta* brings a different set of complications because of the war. The war helped Milton begin to understand borders and barriers and to reinterpret their roles. As Milton examines issues of Englishness and foreignness, he focuses his attention upon the frustrations of England during the conflict, and reevaluates his understanding of nation and nationality. Throughout the poem, he uses Thomas Young as a physical representation of these concepts. *Elegia Quarta* would be the first of young Milton's poems to demonstrate his questioning the boundaries and borders of England and the other European countries. In *Comus*, he continues to evaluate these territories in the same manner as *Elegia Quarta*. However, Milton's attention shifts

from his early assumptions of space and travel. Here, he is not concerned with the concepts of nationality or war; instead, he covers issues of nationalism and the emerging power of England over other countries. This early questioning would mature in his later works.

Chapter Two

Exploring *Elegia Quarta* and *The Masque at Ludlow Castle* initiated young Milton's curiosity of the boundaries and borders in relation to space. However, in the course of his later works, Milton expands upon his original premise about space. As a young Englishman, he did not understand the magnitude of traveling. His only previous experience was in his mind. Traveling gave Milton a firmer perspective of what it was like to be an "Englishman abroad," a role he only imagined for Thomas Young in *Elegia Quarta*. These poems are essential to understand Milton's awareness of his Englishness in the context of other foreignness in the European countries he visited. Maturing as a writer, he developed these elements in his works. He journeyed to Italy in April or early May 1638, accompanied by a family servant. His travels would inspire many of his later

works such as: *Defensio Secunda* (1654), *The Reason of Church Government* (1642), *Paradise Lost* (1667), and *Paradise Regained* (1671).

Ad Salsillum poetam Romanum Aegroantantem (*Ad Salsillum*), *Mansus*, and *Epitaphium Damonis* further developed his earlier concepts of boundaries and borders in between space. In this chapter, I will focus my attention on how these works display young Milton developing concepts of boundaries and borders between the foreign and English spheres during his travels to Italy. In the last chapter, the works I utilize focus upon the English and foreign spheres as distinct from each other. During his travels abroad, his works indicates biculturalism. Milton in these works performs the role of the “English traveler,” which Thomas Young did in *Elegia Quarta*. As he travels, he accepts elements of Italian culture in his life, but at the same time remains steadfast in his “Englishness.” He deliberately becomes an image of the mixed European poet, in the same vein as Geoffrey Chaucer. In the role as the “visitor” or even the “Englishman abroad,” Milton is clearly aware of his place. After his travels, he is neither fully English nor Italian. Traveling has forced him to mark himself as distinctively English to differentiate himself among Italian poets and scholars.

Ad Salsillum was written in Rome between October and November 1638. Of all the poems discussed in this chapter, historically, it was written not too long after Milton’s initial arrival in Italy. This poem was written for Giovanni Salzilli or Salsilli², a poet who

² Referred to as Salzilli, scholars predominantly use Salsilli and this Salsilli will be used.

wrote as Carey³ describes “four flattering lines of Latin verse preferring Milton to Homer, Virgil, and Tasso...” (260). These comparisons were featured in a Salsilli poem “An Epigram by Giovanni Salsilli, of Rome to John Milton, Englishman, who deserves to be crowned with the triple laurels of poetry, certainly Greek, Latin and Etruscan.” Milton greatly treasured Salsilli’s poem. After Salsilli fell ill, Milton composed *Ad Salsillum* to honor him (Campbell and Corns 118). The unequivocal admiration for each other was demonstrated in the poems they had written for each other. Within the poem, Milton transitions to his new role as traveler. He echoes Salsilli’s words early in the poem to indicate the prominence of “the foreign poet” over English ones, and to retain his identity as an emerging poet, not ready to distinguish himself as a master yet, although he is quick to remind his audience of his Englishness to reinforce his loyalty to his country.

The opening lines of the poem introduce Salsilli: “Come along now, if you please, and take these few words to Salsilli. My poetry is dear to him that he prefers it, quite undeservedly, to that of mighty and godlike poets” (262). The beginning lines refer to Salsilli’s poem. Salsilli thought Milton was analogous to the great poets Homer, Virgil, and Tasso. Of the three poets, two are Italian. Virgil was an ancient Italian poet best known for *The Aeneid*, and Torquato Tasso was a sixteenth century Italian poet. Ancient Greek poet Homer was best known for the classical works, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. The comparison to these foreign poets causes Milton to become concerned with

his identity. Milton felt pressured to reaffirm his identity as an Englishman to eliminate any ambiguity as to his culture. Even Salsilli in the title of his poem addresses Milton as "John Milton, Englishman." This reaffirmation of identity was so important to Milton that many of his Italian friends, including Carlo Dati, would address Milton in Latin prose as "To John Milton of London", and later Giambattista Manso would describe Milton's "Englishness" (Lewalski 103). It is clear from the Italian scholar community that they were keen to identify Milton as "English," rather than make him out to be a bicultural being or even to assimilate him fully into their culture. In honoring Milton in the same context as Virgil and Tasso, Salsilli reveres him in the poetic canon. Milton self-fashions his identity. None of these poets are English. Salsilli had the opportunity to connect Milton with great English poets like Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare. Although he could have connected them together, I understand that the poets Salsilli compares Milton to have greater longevity in history. Salsilli would have been acquainted with Chaucer and Shakespeare, but in contrast to Homer and Virgil, they had not been studied for centuries. Previous scholarship discusses Chaucer's trips to Italy, but there is no mention of any accolades bestowed upon him by Italian scholarship. Italian scholars accepted Milton as part of their community, even though they had no common ground. Salsilli's recognition of Milton among these great poets could only be an indicator of the respect he had for him as a poet. Milton reminds his audience of his background:

Young Milton, London-born-and-bred, sends this message, then: Milton, who recently left his nest and his own little bit of sky (where the worst of winds, powerless to control its madly heaving lungs, puffs its panting gusts helter-skelter beneath the heavens), and came to see Italy's fertile soil, its cities - the theme of vaunting fame - its peoples, and the genius of its young intellectuals (262).

"Young Milton, London-born-and-bred" establishes his identity as an Englishman as he describes himself in the third person. Milton does this to claim his identity and to stress that he has not changed in his English identity during his travels in Italy. He describes his youth up to this point of his life. The audience imagines a young Milton maturing physically in London. Then he continues with: "Milton who recently left his nest and his own little bit of sky." This sentence portrays a coming of age for Milton leaving England and, more importantly, his parents' house by using the word "nest." Using the word "nest" connotes a baby bird on the cusp of physically developing and having to leave its parents' nest in order to fully develop. Before traveling, Milton lived with his widowed father, John Milton Sr. Campbell and Corns theorize a few possibilities for Milton leaving home at this time, including how: "the journey may represent social aspirations or an escape from his family (he was unemployed and living in Horton with his recently widowed father)" (103). "Sky" repeats the bird analogy to support his need to leave England to grow in his abilities. The readers follow Milton's travel from one stage of his

life to another. In England, he lives as a citizen. While living there, he occupies a "safe space" because it is familiar. For him to fully "develop" his abilities, he must leave the "nest" and what is familiar to him to make like a baby bird and fly off to Italy.

Throughout his travels, he consistently maintains this position to reject any attempt by Salsilli to influence a bicultural identity. To grow as a poet, he leaves the "nest" and the safety of England for Italy.

At the end of the lines, Milton compares the weather of England and Italy to show the transition of space: "(where the worst of winds, powerless to control its madly heaving lungs, puffs its panting gusts helter-skelter beneath the heavens), and came to see Italy's fertile soil." He portrays English skies as uncontrollably wild and infertile. Because of this, he hints at the infertility of England's culture at the time, which made it necessary for him to leave England, where "culture" was contained in the royal court. London had not yet become the cultural hub it would become, later on in history. Young Milton did not have the means to receive access to the court. Thus, he would have to leave England to receive the type of "culture" contained in it. He interprets Italy as fertile both in the soil of the country and as a cultural outlet. He juxtaposes the image of his homeland to represent the richness of these nations. During *Ad Salsillum*, Milton is aware of his presence in Italy as a "visitor." Unlike Young in *Elegia Quarta*, Milton

travels not for economic means. The journey is necessary for Milton to expand his talents. At this point, he follows the model of travel suggested by Cleveland⁴.

After his honorable portrayal of Giovanni Salsilli, Milton left Rome to travel to Naples in December 1638. His Italian host was Giambattista Manso, Marquis of Villa, who became a good friend and potential patron. Milton's poem *Mansus* serves as a gracious thank you note to his friend. During their friendship, Manso composed a Latin distich honoring Milton: "if your religious convictions were as your mind, your form, your elegance, appearance, and manner, then you would not be an Englishman, but, by Hercules, a true angel." Manso chooses to describe Milton as Hercules to articulate the potential of Milton's power. Hercules becomes a god after his death. According to Manso, if Milton were not an Englishman, he too would become immortal or godlike. In the same way as Hercules had to shed his mortal coil to become a god, Milton must shed his Englishness to become immortal. According to Campbell and Corns, *Mansus* asserts the friendship and patronage of Manso and Milton: "*Mansus* celebrates Manso as a befriender of poets, and Milton clearly thought that a noble role. He presents himself as a young stranger from a northern land, but one whose poetry has been touched by Virgil" (119-21). As Milton indicates his friendship with Manso, he uses traditionally English iconography to describe the distinct differences between England and Italy, such as King Arthur and Merlin. At the same time, by the end of the poem, Milton describes himself

⁴ On Cleveland, see above p. 27.

as figuratively taking the form of a marble bust Roman in nature, complete with a laurel crown, expecting Manso to commission this sculpture upon Milton's death.

The first lines of *Mansus* read: "Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, is one of the most famous gentlemen of Italy, not only because of his reputation for intellectual ability but also because of his devotion to literature and his courage in war" (268). The description is wholly Italian. Milton characterizes him as the most outstanding gentleman of Italy. Unlike *Ad Salsillum*, where Milton briefly refers to Salsilli's background in "your Roman lips" (262), in *Mansus* from the beginning of the poem Milton takes the opportunity to describe Manso. The line "your Roman lips" implies Italianness; however, Milton explicitly states that Manso is a "famous gentleman of Italy." Salsilli who "can fame original Greek lyrics (262)", while Manso has a more well-rounded background, having a "reputation for intellectual ability but also because of his devotion to literature and his courage in war." Manso can both be a scholar and a soldier.

In addition, Milton celebrates his relationship with Manso: "Therefore, father Manso, I, a young stranger sent from Hyperborean skies, wish you a long and healthy life..." (269). Milton considers him a role model by referring to him as "father Manso." Using the term confers upon Manso respect over others. Like in *Ad Salsillum*, Milton views himself as a "young stranger" from another country. Like a father, Manso embraced the young English stranger, welcomed him to his home, and tutored him in Italian culture. The repetition of "England" and symbolism of it ("Hyperborean skies")

demonstrates his continued longing for England. *Ad Salsillum* suggests a feeling of not belonging, in Milton expressing his apprehensions about Salsilli's comparing his works to those of other great poets, and his reaffirming his identity. The feeling Milton conveys in *Mansus*, though, is not that of the intellectual uncertainty suggested by Milton in his earlier poem, but of a type of physical uncertainty. Milton, however, was equivocal about Salsilli's comparisons of him to the ancient poets, because Milton still doubts his place among those classical geniuses. In comparison, Milton's sense of identity in *Mansus* is more physical as he feels estranged from Italy.

He continues to feel isolated: "You, in your goodness, will not be scornful of a Muse from a far-off land who, though poorly nourished beneath the frozen Bear, has recently been rash enough to venture a flight through the cities of Italy" (269). In this moment, he concentrates on his self-examination. "You in your goodness, will not scornful of a Muse from a far-off land" shows his graciousness to his host for making him feel at home. Thomas Young in *Elegia Quarta* heightens his fears of traveling. The first line of this section indicates his graciousness to his host for treating him well. While traveling abroad there are unspoken problems and fears; spending time with Manso had alleviated some of these fears in Milton. Next, Milton examines how his poetry has fared in England. He believes his poetry has been "poorly nourished beneath the frozen Bear." The "frozen Bear" refers to England. Similar to *Ad Salsillum*, Milton portrays his travels from England as necessary for him to explore his potential as a poet. His journey

motivates him to find his place in society. He continues with "how he has recently been rash enough to venture a flight through the cities of Italy." The word "rash" implies "without warning", which historically is not true, since Milton had to prepare for months to leave England. The preparation for traveling would have at least taken a few months to prepare in advance (Campbell and Corns 102).

The blend between English and Italian poetry shifts in: "Why, our Tityrus, too once visited your land" (269). Estelle Haan associates Tityrus to Chaucer via Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar*. Historically, Chaucer's experiences mirror Milton's more than Tasso's, as a few Milton scholars have suggested. As an English poet, Chaucer traveled to Italy at least twice in his lifetime (1372 and 1378)⁵. During these travels for the crown of England, Chaucer began to find inspiration in Italian tradition in the same fashion as Milton. As Chaucer scholar Rosalyn Rossingnol writes: "Chaucer could not have helped being influenced by the respect accorded to poetry and its practitioners in Italy, and perhaps it gave him a new sense of himself and the role he was to have in shaping English literature" (184-5). "Our" applies to the people of England. Chaucer's role in creating the English tradition set the path for many future poets, prose writers, playwrights, etc. Chaucer during most of his lifetime acted as a representative of England to Europe. Inspired by Chaucer, Milton could have seen himself as inheriting his legacy.

⁵ From December 1372 through May 1373, Chaucer employed as a squire to the king was sent on a mission to negotiate with Genoese merchants. The second time Chaucer traveled to Italy would be from May 28 through September 1378, when he was involved in the marriage negotiations between King Richard II and Caterina Bernabo (Pearsall 105-9).

Thus, he acts as an English traveler bringing foreign concepts to the English literary tradition in the same vein as Chaucer once did.

At the end of the poem, Milton imagines what his death may be like with a friend like Manso at his side. During his imagining, he writes: "Perhaps he might have my features carved in marble, binding my hair with a wreath of Paphian myrtle or of Parnassian laurels: and I shall rest safe and at peace" (270). Ending with the image of commemoration as a Roman aristocrat, Milton comes full circle over the course of the poem. In the beginning, he is self-aware of his status as an "English visitor", and yet ends by pairing himself with classical Roman garb. By the end, the reader views Milton as coming full circle. Clearly, he features biculturalism. Estelle Haan best describes this situation:

In Milton's case bronze is discarded in favor of marble alone in a stunningly poetic self-fashioning evocative perhaps of the Horatian "monument" that can outlive bronze. As in Horace, the Miltonic monument is ultimately the poetic creation. Its bard is now garlanded with a wreath-either a myrtle-wreath evocative of Venus or a laurel-wreath representative of Apollo, god of poetry or perhaps-the mighty Tasso himself (129).

Haan suggests that this moment in the poem is Milton styling himself as a poet. As he does this, the laurel around his marbled head indicates a classical foreign entity. The

description covers how the laurel crown was worn by the Greek god Apollo. Yet the laurel crown was also a common staple in depicting Roman Emperors. With this in mind, Milton doubly self-fashions himself. He is a great bard and something foreign at the same time. This illustrates an imaginative moment of Milton's death. Instead of being simply "remembered," Manso would have a marble bust of Milton commissioned as a reminder of their friendship. Though Milton envisions himself as a foreign marble bust, he is imagining his foreign friend as venerating him in the tradition of his country. Next, the desire to be cast in marble evokes Roman tradition, possibly derived from Roman ancestor veneration (Stokstad 180).

While the earlier poems were composed in Italy, *Epitaphium Damonis* is the only one of Milton's poems composed in England. Historically, the poem was written within his first few months back from traveling. The poem commemorates the death of his childhood friend Charles Diodati, who died in the August after Milton left England. As the poem laments his friend's death, it shows itself to be not a "wholly English poem" either, by complementing the addition of his acquaintances from his Italian visit and his intention to "retell the foundation myths of the English or British people" (Campbell and Corns 135-7). Within the poem, these elements blend to create a piece of biculturalism. Components of his life prior to his travel merge with the places and people he met on his trip. Milton fuses two completely distinct aspects of his life together. The foreign sphere, by the time this poem exists, was not as intimidating as his early works prior to

his travels may suggest. Mandy Green proposes the relationship and the impact of his death on Milton's life as Milton's first "fit audience." (166). Diodati played the role in Milton's life of helping him cultivate his poetry and prose. Honoring Diodati and his travels abroad bridges the gap between what was once viewed as "foreign" and England to Milton. However, this poem of all the Italian poems reveals the most self-fashioning of his identity as an English poet.

Early in the poem, Milton writes about Thyrsis and Damon, shepherds of the same neighborhood, who cultivated the same interests and were the closest friends from childhood on. Thyrsis, while traveling abroad for pleasure, received news of Damon's death. Later, when he returned home and found that this news was true, he bewailed his lot and his loneliness in this poem. As Milton himself explains in a headnote to the poem, "*'Damon' here represents Charles Diodati, who was descended on his father's side from the Tuscan city of Lucca, but who was, in every other respect, English*" (282). Diodati replacing Thomas Young here, *Epitaphium Damonis* starts with Milton comparing his friendship with Charles Diodati to the shepherds Thyrsis and Damon. The opening lines of the poem address Milton's audience about the background to the situation. Thyrsis and Damon's characters parallel the story of Milton and Diodati. Thyrsis was travelling abroad when he heard about the death of his close friend Damon. The prologue introduction gives the readers an insight into Milton's feelings about the loss and how he would classify Diodati's nationality. Milton characterizes Diodati as being "descended on

his father's side from the Tuscan city of Lucca, but who was, in every other respect, English." Milton explains that Diodati has an Italian background because of his father. Diodati's father was Theodore Diodati, a physician of Tuscan descent while his mother was an Englishwoman (Campbell and Corns 22).

The focus on Diodati's family history serves as the opposite of Thomas Young's role. In *Epitaphium Damonis*, the reader learns about Diodati's Italian heritage, and the poem is not ambiguous about the topic. From historical sources, Diodati's mother was an Englishwoman, thus- making Diodati of Italian and English descent, a combination of two cultures. More importantly, Milton describes Diodati as "in every other respect, English." Milton constructs the other Italian poets to create for them a bicultural identity; yet, Diodati's "apparent biculturalism" in the text fails to happen. Milton denies Diodati the possibility of acting as a representation of both of these countries as either distinct from each other or blended together again like Thomas Young's Scottish heritage. Rather, Diodati's identity shifts. Milton adjusts his identity in the text to be act as an English figure. "In every other respect, English" transforms him more into a representation of Englishness. The reader does not experience Diodati in the poem as a living figure. In lieu of this, the only moments the readers observe connect with his death. This Diodati is a memory. As a living figure, he may not have represented Englishness at all. However, for the purpose of the poem, Milton introduces the hybrid Diodati as English to highlight the Englishness of the poem.

Epitaphium Damonis memorializes Diodati's life through epigraph. Secondly, Milton, now in England, uses *Epitaphium Damonis* to bridge his English and Italian friends together through Latin and by introducing elements from his travels into the poem. Specifically, early in the poem he addresses his friends Antonio Francini and Carlo Dati: "What is more, Dati and Francini, famous poets and scholars both, and both of Lydian blood, taught their beech trees my name" (284) and Manso in: "And I was keeping also the two cups which Manso gave me - Manso, not the least glory of the Neapolitan shore." (285). Mentioning these individuals assists between the two aspects of Milton's life. In this section, both of these elements collide with each other to produce a more apparent biculturalism. He tries to unite both of these parts of himself by blending elements of the cultures together. As for Dati and Francini, the men are still in Italy, yet with them are Milton's "English" words that they are teaching to their beech trees. Beech trees are found in both Italy and England and bind the countries as similar to one another. The moment concerning Manso is as Green describes "Milton represents himself as having anticipated the pleasure of recounting his Italian triumph, keeping the trophies safe to show him" (175). Milton wants to share with his English/Italian friend his trophies, even give him some token of it (based on the connotation of "two cups"). Manso's gift has the opposite effect to Francini and Dati, where Manso's Italian gifts are with Milton in England. A piece of Manso comes back to England with Milton. Yet, Manso's gifts are more poignant and serve as a hard reminder of Diodati's death.

Continuing his progress of combining elements of his life together, Milton proceeds with building up the future of his poetry: "and every grove of Trent, and above all my native Thames and the Tamar, stained with metals, and if the Orkneys among their distant waves will learn my song." (285). At first, the line acknowledges travel of some sort. All the locations Milton mentions are some type of body of water, or surrounded by a body of water. Trent, Tamar, and Thames are large rivers in England and known for the transportation of goods and individuals. The name Orkney mentioned in Milton's poem refers to the Orkney Islands in Scotland. These islands are located about 20 miles from the Scottish mainland. Milton uses the mode of water travel to describe how his words will "learn his song." Rivers and bodies of water do not adhere to boundaries the same way as a landmass does. These rivers act in the same way as the English Channel does in *Elegia Quarta*. Andrew McRae outlines the importance of rivers in early modern England: "Rivers are figures of mobility mapped out onto the landscape, at once evocative of place yet curiously placeless" (508). The importance of the river comes in: "Navigable rivers were recognized as public highways open to transportation in the same way the open roads" (513). Rivers transport items, people, or ideas from one place to another. The rivers Milton describes are all English, and only Orkney goes beyond England's borders. In choosing these rivers, Milton sets up a perimeter to the extent of his "song." Through his Italian poems, he cultivates the image of a national bard who would represent his country to the world. The limits of this moment only go as far as an

island off the coast of Scotland and only in the role of the national hero does he stay within these limits.

Overall, the line indicates a promise to Milton's readers of his role as a poet and the prominence he would receive from it. Earlier, I explained Milton's desire to express the abilities and capacity for poetry he learned and built upon during his visit to Italy. By the end of *Epitaphium Damonis*, Milton shows his readers a different side of his ambitions. One of the main goals in Milton's trips around Italy was to help him acquire a sense of direction in his life and the occupation he wanted. After his travels, his passion for the role of a great poet was revived. Lewalski best sums up what the experience and this moment in *Epitaphium Damonis* did for young Milton: "One consequence of all this was a great boost of self-confidence in the rightness of his chosen vocation as a poet. Another, despite his deep love for Italy and his Italian friends, was a reaffirmation of his own Englishness and of English Protestant culture" (87). As Milton expresses his biculturalism, his resistance to becoming bicultural, and combination of the two spheres, his travels foster a revival of his passions for his culture and country. Though at times his image blends smoothly with the foreign Italian, deep inside Milton's main goal is to expand upon his own culture.

Throughout the Italian poems, Milton demonstrates a keen understanding in his biculturalism and use of Latin. Although the poems exhibit elements of the combination of the foreign Italian sphere and the English sphere, during his poems, he is aware of his

Englishness and desires to write a great epic about the life of King Arthur. William Ingram notes the apparent lack of King Arthur on Elizabethan stages a generation before Milton: "Milton's sense of priorities in these matters constitutes a curious reverse image of the attitude prevalent a generation earlier, in the heyday of the English history play, when the story of Arthur was barely attended to by playwrights and---we may perhaps conjecture by analogy---little demanded by audiences" (33). His awareness leads him to begin to describe an epic he wants to write. Historically, he would never actually write this great "English" epic, at least not in the manner envisioned here. These moments provide an insight into the culture of Englishness during Milton's life and how he viewed the myth of Arthur as the creator of the nation that would later become known as "Britain" or "England." Arthur for most of his usage in English culture has been an icon of Englishness. His role in Milton's poems represents a correlation between Englishness and Milton's identity as an Englishman.

In *Mansus*, then, he exhibit his Englishness through the desire to create a great "English" epic. The choice of King Arthur shows the beginnings of an understanding of the conception of the Englishness seen in Milton's lifetime:

O, may it be my good luck to find such a friend, who knows so well how
to honour Phoebus's followers, if ever I call back into poetry the kings of
my native land and Arthur, who set wars raging even under the earth or
tell of the great-hearted heroes of the round table, which their fellowship

made invincible, and - if only the inspiration would come - smash the Saxon phalanxes beneath the impact of the British Charge (269-270).

In "if I ever call back into poetry the kings of my native land," Milton concentrates on a broad subject of English history, where there had been a long history of kingship. Starting with a broader subject, he fixates mid-sentence on Arthur's exploits. This moment appears to be a moment of brainstorming ideas of what exactly to write concerning Arthur. Unfortunately for Milton, he hopes it would come: "if only inspiration would come - smash the Saxon phalanxes beneath the impact of the British charge." However, he must navigate through other older English history (Saxon history) to get to the point where the idea of Britain emerges. As Milton must defeat the Saxons phalanxes in his mind for inspiration, Arthur did the same according to *Historia Brittonum*. As a Christian king expelling Saxon pagans, Arthur would have been even mightier than Milton. Within *Mansus*, Milton chronicles the "good" nature of these individuals in "good-hearted heroes."

Historical elements of King Arthur's image in part helped inspire this usage. To poets, and playwrights, Arthur emerged as a cultural icon of the English people in the same manner as Charlemagne for France. The origin of the Arthurian myth gave English subjects living in Norman Britain a type of cultural legitimacy through Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie* (*The History of the Kings of Britain*) (Kohler 5). Arthur's image would have been used by English kings and queens for a few reasons: to

cultivate a political identity, to claim ancestry from him, and legitimize their claim to the throne (Kohler 11). Milton observes these cultural elements of Arthur, and uses the popularity of Arthur's image during King James I's early reign (King James I utilized an Arthurian image of Merlin's prophecy to depict himself as the unifier of Great Britain) (Kohler 27). Writing *Mansus*, Milton is willing to use the image of Arthur to hark back to English nationalism.

Again in *Epitaphium Damonis*, about a year after *Mansus* he describes this great "English epic" about King Arthur including a more detailed description:

Then I shall tell of Igraine, pregnant with Arthur as a result of fatal deception: I shall tell of the lying features which misled her, and of the borrowing of Gorlois's armour, Merlin's trick. O, if I have any time left to live, you, my pastoral pipe, will hang far away on the branch of some old pine tree, utterly forgotten by me, or else, transformed by my native muses, you will rasp out a British tune." (285).

Epitaphium Damonis utilizes the same elements as *Mansus*, except that by the time of *Epitaphium Damonis* Milton decides to focus on the birth of Arthur. In the same manner, Milton employs Arthur to demonstrate the English identity. Unlike his previous mentions of Arthur, Milton does not concentrate on him. Instead, Milton uses Arthur to promote his identity as a "British" poet. Yet, he does address the possibility of the future of the poem, its final form "transformed by my native muses." "Native muses" refer to

ones who are British. Like his confirmation of his identity, Milton leaves no room for ambiguity. The epic poem about King Arthur would have been thought of as a great "English" epic. Although if it reached completion, the poem might have had elements of Italian literature in it, Milton firmly suggests it was going to be a poem about "England" for England.

Thus, Milton's travels to Italy helped him reevaluate the boundaries and borders between mainland Europe and England. His adventures changed his perspective of space and identity. In turn, *Ad Salsillum*, *Mansus*, and *Epitaphium Damonis* demonstrate the process he went through to develop a mature perspective of the distinction between Europe and England, but he focuses on his identity as English. His travels led him to develop a large following in Italy, where he came to be considered by some a part of their community. However, Milton resisted this transformation into a bicultural person by reaffirming his English identity. In these poems, he portrays Charles Diodati in the same manner, not restate it like Milton does, but to separate the two spaces in Milton's mind. Diodati was a childhood friend of Milton's in England; thus Milton insists that Diodati's identity is English and not bicultural. All of Milton's Italian friends are clearly described as Italian. Combining these efforts, Milton produces a series of diverse poems tackling issues of borders and boundaries and the various aspects associated with them.

Conclusion

Milton's quest to understand the distinction between foreign and English spheres was an issue in his works preceding the Commonwealth period of his life. Milton would take these concepts from his early days as an emerging poet, and apply them to his later works. Though most scholars tend to focus on the latter half of his life including *Paradise Lost*, I focused my attention on his early works. These early works display Milton developing ideas of boundaries and borders between countries, the English identity, and nationalism. Later on, he would master his skills to produce thought provoking works. However, most scholars follow the direction of his later works rather than exploring the possibilities highlighted in early works.

I divided my thesis into two sections. The first section focuses on his works prior to his travels to Italy. *Elegia Quarta* (Elegy IV) and *The Masque at Ludlow Castle* both demonstrate different components to answer questions about his developing concepts of borders and boundaries. Within *Elegia Quarta*, Milton questions the limits of English borders during times of war. To answer these questions, Milton utilizes Thomas Young fighting in the Thirty Years' War, the English Channel, and the White Cliffs of Dover as symbols to demonstrate the physical changes of space and crossings of borders and boundaries. Unlike his other works, *Elegia Quarta* is the only one to portray the change of setting through physical spaces. Throughout *Elegia Quarta* Milton guides his readers through a figurative journey from England to Germany and back to England. Young's national identity plays a role in how this is portrayed. In the poem, Milton describes Young's identity rather ambiguously. He does this because for him Young is understood

to be English, not Scottish (even though he was born in Scotland). In *The Masque at Ludlow Castle*, Milton directs his attention from war to focus on the nature of the boundaries and borders and the divide between England and Wales, and employs *Comus* to develop his own, idealistic views of nationalism. *Comus* celebrates English dominance over Wales, but questions the limitations of its power.

The second half focuses primarily on Milton's Italian poems: *Ad Salsillum poetam Romanum Aegrotantem*, *Mansus*, and *Epitaphium Damonis*. These poems demonstrate the effects his travels had on his developing his ideas of boundaries, borders, and the English identity. As a traveler, he portrays himself as reaffirming his identity to reinforce his loyalty to England. While in Italy, Milton was accepted by many Italian scholars, who considered him a part of their community. As much as Milton accepted this position, however, any attempt by them to portray or consider him bicultural was rejected. One notable example is in *Mansus*, where Milton depicts a scene in which Manso commissions a Roman in nature bust of Milton after his death. Although at times he does accept elements of Italian culture into his poems, he still favors his English identity over a bicultural one.

The 1645 collection of poems began with Milton fundamentally trying to understand his place within changing concepts of England after the ascension of King James I, and the English Civil War (1642-1651) would change the climate of England once more, without a monarch. Before his appointment to Secretary of Foreign Tongues, Milton concentrates his attention on the distinctions between the English identity and the foreign one in most of his regicide tracts written after the execution of King Charles on January 30, 1649. These tracts characterize a change in the portrayal of Charles I from an

“English” king to a Scottish foreigner on the throne. Redefining the king was an attempt to bolster the Commonwealth’s power in England; however, it did not. His regicide tracts would attract the attention of the Council of State, who in turn appointed Milton to the position of Secretary of Foreign Tongues. His early experiences with concentrating on issues of boundaries and borders and the distinction of space between mainland Europe and England helped him in transitioning into this role. As Secretary of Foreign Tongues, his role was to act as a foreign correspondent to other European countries to establish a diplomatic and cultural legitimacy for Commonwealth England. After the failure of the Commonwealth period and the rise of the Restoration, an older, disappointed Milton would gaze once more back at aspects of his Italian adventures to incorporate into his epic poem *Paradise Lost*. For many scholars, *Paradise Lost* is widely considered the beginning of Milton’s greatness; nonetheless, *Paradise Lost* is only one component of Milton’s collective works.

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